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Social Evolution. By BENJAMIN KIDD. New York and London : Macmillan & Co., 1894. 8vo. pp. vi+348.

IN this work the attempt is made to apply the principles and methods of biological science to human society for the purpose of explaining its character and discovering the direction of its growth. The author, Mr. Benjamin Kidd, is an Englishman, still quite young, but well read and well educated. *Social Evolution* is the product of several years of thought and research, a work, therefore, of careful deliberation. The book is written in popular style.

At the outset Mr. Kidd lays down certain universal laws of life. (1) There is no innate tendency in life to progress. On the contrary, if all the individuals of every generation in any species were allowed equally to propagate their kind, there would be a constant retrogression. (2) It follows that progress is conditioned upon the predominating reproduction of the individuals of any species who are above the general average. (3) This predominance of the better individuals can follow only from constant competition and selection, and the multiplication of the species beyond the limits which the average conditions of life comfortably provide for. To sum up : "The law of life has been the same from the beginning,—ceaseless and inevitable struggle and competition, ceaseless and inevitable selection and rejection, ceaseless and inevitable progress."

These conditions of progress are absolutely indispensable, and affect individual man in common with all other forms of life. But in human evolution two new forces enter into the problem,—phenomena which are quite distinct and peculiar. These are : (1) man's reason, and (2) his capacity for acting in concert with his fellows in society. The advent of these forces changes at once the point of view from which the evolutionary process is to be regarded. Social, rather than individual and intellectual evolution, is henceforth the predominant feature of progress, because, Mr. Kidd assumes, only through the evolution of society can man attain his highest development. But society is an organic growth ; it has a certain form of life and a certain course of development ; it obeys the same laws of life as other organisms. Therefore, the evolution of society requires that its individual members be subject to the same laws of stress and competition and selection as other forms of life. "In fact, if progress is to continue, the individual must be compelled to submit to conditions of existence of the most onerous kind, which, to all appearances, his reason actually gives him

the power to suspend—and all to further a development in which he has not, and in which he never can have, *qua* individual, the slightest practical interest.” In a word, the interests of the individual and the social organism are and must remain antagonistic. Yet the necessary condition of progress is the submission of the immediate interests of the individual to the ultimate interests of society. Man’s reason is necessarily opposed to this, hence, there can never be any rational sanction for progress. If, then, progress is to continue, there must be an integrating force strong enough to overcome the individualistic power of reason. This integrating force Mr. Kidd finds in religion. All religions, he says, have this in common, and no belief can be called a religion without it, viz.: they furnish an ultra-rational sanction for individual conduct. This is their function in society, and the existence of this ultra-rational sanction, which prevents the suspension, by man’s reason, of the conditions of progress, is the great central fact of history.

Having set forth the principles and conditions of progress, Mr. Kidd proceeds to study, in the light of their existence, the actual social organism. Western civilization, he finds to be exactly coexistent with the Christian religion. The distinctive product of this religion is Altruism. This is the formative force now at work upon society. The present and the future of our social organism depend on the nature of the tendencies it fosters. To determine the function of altruism is then, to obtain the key to the future. A careful examination of the Christian era convinces Mr. Kidd that altruism is not, as generally supposed, lessening the competition and stress of life. On the contrary, where altruism is most developed, he finds competition, humanized it is true, most active and involving the greatest number of individuals. Altruism is indeed, by softening and deepening human character, gradually forcing from the power-holding classes concessions to the masses of the people,—concessions, however, that, by securing greater equality of opportunity and freedom of activity, tend always toward increased competition. The true function of altruism then, is to bring all classes of men into competition on a footing of equality, where the law of the survival of the fittest shall have fullest and fairest sway.

The development of the altruistic spirit was that which gave men in the eighteenth century personal freedom. In the nineteenth, it has practically secured political freedom. We are now on the eve of a

third great movement,—industrial and social in its character. Will this third change result in socialism? Mr. Kidd answers this momentous question in the negative. True socialism, he says, has invariably one end in view,—“the final suspension of that personal struggle for existence which has been waged from the beginning of life.” But the inevitable conditions of progress and the tendencies of modern society alike preclude the attainment of this ideal. State interference, in favor of the masses at the expense of the classes will indeed continue to increase, whether we like it or not, but this interference will always have in view the end of securing greater freedom of competition rather than its final suspension.

Social Evolution is not a well written book. It is especially wanting in coherence. Neither the chapters nor their contents are arranged in logical sequence. Indeed, there is throughout such a confused mingling of proof and check, of theory and history, that it is extremely difficult logically to formulate the author's position. Yet, in spite all this, one cannot rise from the study of the book without feeling that one has been conversing with a man of philosophical grasp and argumentative force. One instinctively attributes the poor workmanship to an attempt on the part of the writer to appeal to a popular audience. Probably on account of this difficulty of grasping clearly his train of thought, Mr. Kidd has been much attacked for inconsistency. He is, it is said, alternately ultra-socialistic and ultra-individualistic. This charge cannot be maintained. Once grant Mr. Kidd's premises and his conclusions follow plausibly enough, the successful critic must go deeper. If Mr. Kidd's conclusions are refuted it must be done by a direct attack upon his postulates. Here, indeed, there is debatable ground.

The whole fabric of Mr. Kidd's argument really rests upon two assumptions. First, he assumes that stress is absolutely necessary for progress, *i. e.*, he denies the possibility of the inheritance of acquired tendencies. Yet this subject is still in the stage of heated discussion, and until the Weissmann-Spencer controversy has progressed much further than at present, it will not be possible to postulate the absolute necessity of stress, much less to base upon it a theory of social progress. Second, Mr. Kidd assumes that the interests of the individual and society are and must remain antagonistic. From this he draws the inference that there can never be any rational sanction for progress. Here postulate and inference seem to rest upon a peculiar use of the

word "reason." As Mr. Kidd views reason, it can sanction those things only that yield an immediate benefit to the individual directly involved. Manifestly, this is a very narrow use of the term. Yet unless it be allowed, the whole structure of his theory of progress is destroyed. Take away the great disintegrating force in society and there is no longer any ground for postulating religion as the one great integrating force, which alone prevents the suspension of the conditions of progress, and shapes the course of social history. The most general fault, indeed, of Mr. Kidd's book seems to lie just in this attempt to make simple what is, of necessity, complex. In assuming that men submit to stress and competition solely through the power of religion he is at least leaving out of account the influence of economic forces, and ignoring the fact that the great mass of men are conditioned, in their action, by the pressure of circumstances; they must submit if they live.

R. F. HOXIE.

Ueber die Entwicklung der australischen Eisenbahnpolitik nebst einer Einleitung über das Problem der Eisenbahnpolitik in Theorie und Praxis. By DR. MORITZ KANDT. Berlin: Hans Mammoth, 1894. 8vo. pp. xxxiv+263.

THE experience of Australia is attracting more and more attention in recent years as students come to realize the importance of the experiments which are being tried by the English of the antipodes. Their socialistic experiments have for almost a generation controlled the development and shaped the industry of the colonies. The experiments have been tried under circumstances singularly favorable, and until recent financial disturbances caused closer investigation and revealed the real character of their boasted prosperity, the success of government ownership and management of railways in the Australian colonies was cited by those who favor enlarging the sphere of state activity as proof of the feasibility of their schemes. With such a view obtaining credence it is natural for Dr. Cohn and his school to make a special study of Australian railways. The work has been undertaken on the plan common among the Germans and, so far as the results are published, carried out with German thoroughness.

Dr. Kandt begins with an elaborate bibliography, not only of railway literature bearing on the subject in hand, but of all railway literature,